

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 22 September 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
22 SEPTEMBER 1967

1. Vietnam

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2. South Vietnam

Former minister of economy and one-time presidential candidate Au Truong Thanh was taken into custody this morning.

Police Director Loan took part yesterday in a raid on Thanh's home. The raid involved some manhandling of Thanh and several foreign correspondents. Loan would say only that he wished to question Thanh about US visas which he had requested.

Thanh attempted to enter the presidential race as a "peace candidate," but was disqualified early on suspicion of pro-Communist sympathies. Heavy-handed police measures toward Thanh, following closely upon the conviction of presidential runner-up Truong Dinh Dzu, will undoubtedly give rise to charges that the government is out to suppress opposition.

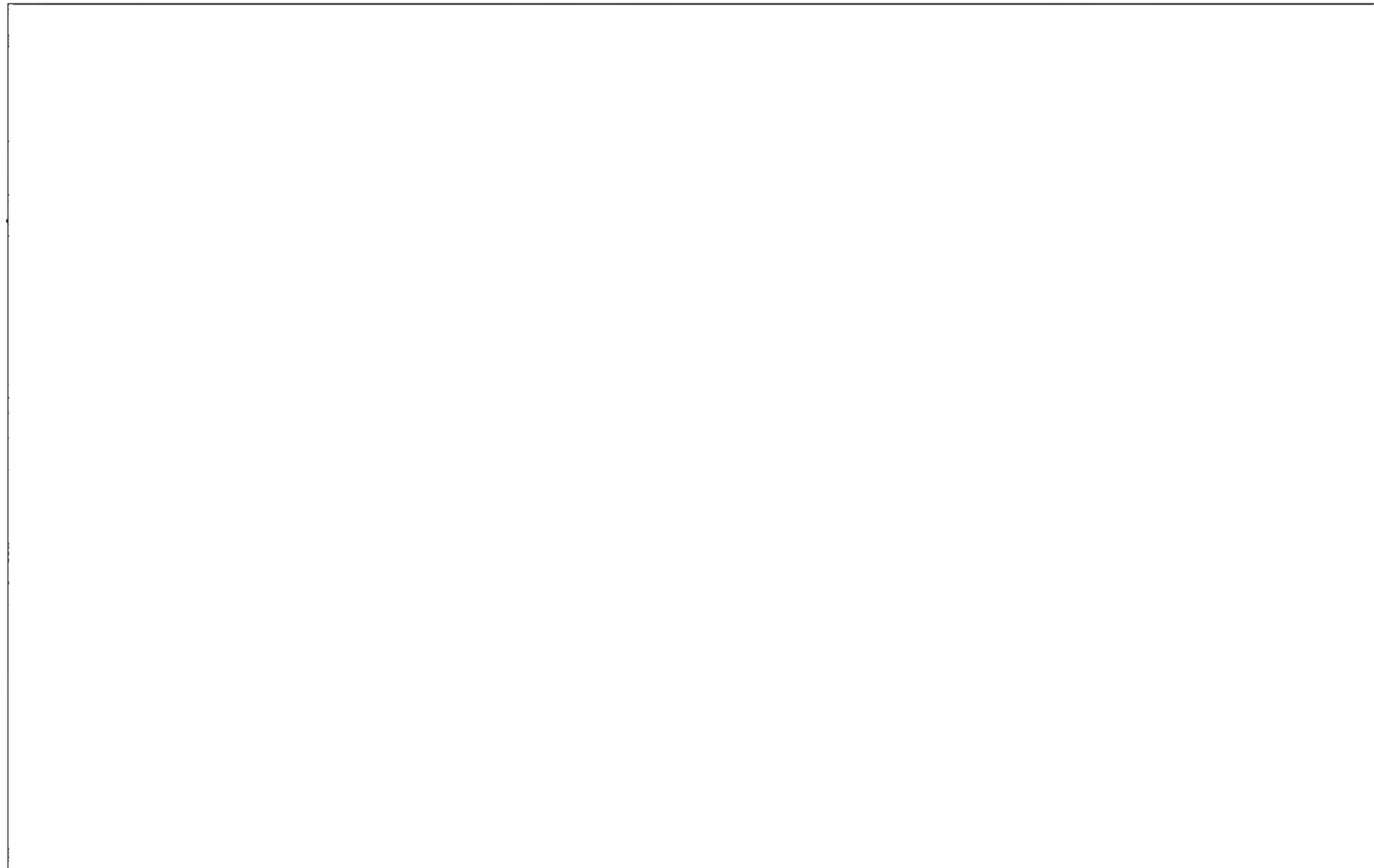
A recent defector, probably a Viet Cong major, claims that the Viet Cong were in fact ordered to get out the vote for Dzu. He says a directive applying to the entire country, issued nine days before the election, required all Viet Cong cadres not otherwise occupied to urge people to vote for Dzu. The defector added that the order was given because of Dzu's stated wish to follow the road of peace and neutrality.

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3. Soviet Union

The Soviet satellite reconnaissance program has achieved a considerable level of sophistication. Satellites are routinely launched about twice each month from Tyuratam or Plesetsk.

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4. Middle East

The oil crisis caused by the Arab-Israeli war has passed. World-wide production of oil last month exceeded the level reached in May before the crisis, and the movement of oil to importing countries is nearly normal. The supply of tankers is still tight, but should catch up with demand early next year.

5. Communist China

Peking has commented publicly on Secretary McNamara's announcement of a limited US antiballistic missile system. In a broadcast on Wednesday, Peking radio said that this was "another anti-Chinese measure" adopted to intensify Washington's "collusion" with Moscow. It added that China had never been afraid of "blackmail," and now that the Chinese have their own nuclear weapons, Peking "certainly" would not be intimidated.

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6. Communist China

The internal situation is in no way improving. During the past week, a train was blown up on the Shanghai-Nanking railroad, fighting temporarily closed the Chang-chun airfield, and heavy fighting with machine-guns and artillery continued around Chungking. Canton city has been relatively quiet the past few days but clashes continue in the suburbs.

7. Nigeria

The African "consultative" mission set up to try to help solve the Nigerian crisis is not likely to get to Lagos until late October. Two of the heads of state involved have other commitments this month and Mobutu says he cannot leave the Congo as long as the mercenaries remain. On top of this, the federal Nigerian Government itself is cool to the whole idea--especially now that its military position is improving.

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SPECIAL DAILY REPORT ON NORTH VIETNAM

FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

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Canadian on Life in Hanoi: Canadian International Control Commission member Dier, in Saigon after a two-week visit to Hanoi, had a long talk with Senator Symington and Ambassador Bunker on 17 September. Among other things, Dier said the center of Hanoi had become a sanctuary for truck repair and maintenance because it was free of bomb attacks. He saw few signs of a power shortage and noted there seemed to be thousands of auxiliary generators in operation. At no time during his visit was the power off for more than an hour. Dier's observations probably were confined largely to the diplomatic quarter, however, where we know the North Vietnamese make a special effort to maintain power.

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A doctor connected with the Control Commission in Hanoi told Dier that there were signs of malnutrition showing up in small children. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] We think he exaggerates the effects of food shortages and that he probably bases his remarks on limited observations rather than on direct clinical examination. Other observers see evidence of food shortages, but nothing severe enough to cause signs of malnutrition.

Dier was shown an area of bomb damage in Hanoi in which 17 buildings were destroyed and 69 persons killed. He assumes this was caused by a bomb jettisoned over the city.

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Women Visitors in Hanoi: Three women from the Women's Strike for Peace group, including Mrs. Dagmar Wilson, were in North Vietnam while Dier was there and he traveled with them both to and from Hanoi. He said the women had been taken all over the country, including places he could not go, and they returned more convinced than ever that the US was wrong. Dier attempted to rebut their unquestioning acceptance of the North Vietnamese line, but without results.

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